A U M

Hear ye all this moral maxim; and having heard it keep it well: Whatsoever is displeasing to yourselves never do to another.—*Bstan-hgyur,* v. 123, leaf 174.

Then declared he unto them the rule of doing to others what we ourselves like.
—*San-kiao-yuen-liau.*

From henceforth . . . put away evil and do good.—*Jataka, 6.*

THEOSOPHY

Vol. VII MARCH, 1919 No. 5

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"RECENT THEOSOPHICAL TEACHINGS"

IN the *Messenger,* the official organ of the American Section of Mrs. Besant's theosophical society, in the July and November issues of 1918, appeared two articles by Mr. A. P. Sinnett. The first of these was entitled "Recent Theosophical Teachings," and the other bears the heading, "The Masters and Their Methods of Instruction."

Mr. Sinnett is the Vice-President of Mrs. Besant's society, and, more than that, was one of the earliest writers on theosophical subjects. His first book, "The Occult World," was published in 1881, and his second, "Esoteric Buddhism," was issued in 1883. He has published several other works with a theosophical purpose and has continuously written in magazines and in the "Transactions of the London Lodge" a great variety of articles, all allegedly theosophical in character and treatment.

The Occult World and Esoteric Buddhism have had a very wide circulation, and it is not improbable that more people have gained their original ideas upon Theosophy from these books than from any other literature. The first contains an account of Mr. Sinnett's acquaintance with Madame Blavatsky and of the phenomena he witnessed at her hands, and embodies extracts from some letters of the Masters, with whom he came into correspondence through Madame Blavatsky's intervention. Esoteric Buddhism is an attempt on Mr. Sinnett's part to give an outline of the theosophical philosophy, based on answers from the Masters to letters of his own, and his understanding and interpretations of the statements made to him.

Because of his long connection with the theosophical movement, his ability as a writer, and his great reputation among those not fully

informed on the various subjects of which he treats, or the history of the Theosophical Society and its leading figures, it is natural and inevitable that anything Mr. Sinnett has to say should possess a factitious importance to very many people. On the implied assumption of his knowledge, and on the known fact of the tendency of human nature to accept claims at their face value, there is great danger of the unwary being grossly misled into accepting as Theosophy and theosophical anything that Mr. Sinnett may say. This is equally true of any other prominent and credited exponent whose statements come at last to be accepted as those of one having authority, instead of being scrutinized and examined on the basis of their intrinsic merit.

Very much that Mr. Sinnett has written, and particularly his earlier publications, have served a highly useful and important purpose. The same can be said of Col. H. S. Olcott and of Mrs. Annie Besant, as well as of others lesser known. Unfortunately for them, for the world, and for the work of the true Theosophical Movement, it is equally and regrettably true that very much of the writings of Mr. Sinnett and the others named have been inaccurate and untrue as to matters of fact, misleading in their tendencies, and distinctly *un*theosophical, not to say *anti*-theosophical, in the presentation of the teachings of the Wisdom-Religion. They have all erred, and erred grievously, in presenting their own understanding and interpretations, their own speculations, imaginings and inferences, as being direct and correct statements of Theosophy. And they have sinned still more unwarrantably in claiming and taking the position of teachers and authorities, when in fact they were never anything but students and workers, and very fallible ones at that. That any one should fall short, either as student or as helper, of the high ideals set by Theosophy and practically embodied in the Masters and their direct Agents, is neither a crime nor a thing to grieve over. It is inherent in that very human nature which the Wisdom-Religion alone can aid in overcoming by knowledge and application. But that those who are at best but learners and possible servants of a high philosophy should pose as teachers and exemplars, and should by their work and example corrupt and pervert the very teachings which they profess to impart, and lead the inquirers far from the Source—this is a crime and a thing to be exposed and prevented as far as possible.

Writing in the preface of *Isis Unveiled,* Madame Blavatsky announced that her work was for the sake of those who "are willing to accept truth wherever it may be found, and to defend it, even looking popular prejudice straight in the face," and that such an attitude must "speak the truth alike without malice or prejudice." It must "do even justice," but it must show "neither mercy for enthroned error, nor reverence for usurped authority."

Writing again in the preface and the introductory to the Secret Doctrine—and this time specifically in reference to the inaccuracies and erroneous presentations of Mr. Sinnett—she stated that the

publication of much therein written "has been rendered necessary by the wild and fanciful speculations in which many Theosophists and students of mysticism have indulged, during the last few years, in their endeavour, as they imagined, to work out a complete system of thought from the few facts previously communicated to them." And she laid down as a consistent guide to the students the statement that "it is above everything important to keep in mind that no theosophical book acquires the least additional value from pretended authority." And although from her very first public utterance to her last words she consistently declared that her teachings were none of her own invention or discovery, but came from her Masters, she never in any way sought or desired that students should accept anything she had to say on any other basis than that of intrinsic merit. She declares in the preface to the Secret Doctrine: "These truths are in no sense put forward as a *revelation;* nor does the author claim the position of a revealer of mystic lore, now made public for the first time in the world's history."

Writing again, early in 1889, to those students who proposed to make the study and application of Theosophy their prime duty in life, she called their attention to the danger of corruption of the pure teachings of Theosophy on the part of those who might be tempted to pose as revealers of new and undreamed of truths with materials largely stolen from Theosophy, and distorted and falsified to suit. She said: "It is the duty of all members to do their utmost to unmask such movements, for nothing is more dangerous to Esoteric Truth than the garbled and distorted versions disfigured to suit the prejudices and tastes of men in general."

Every theosophical student knows, or should know, that the fundamental basis of the presentation called Theosophy by H. P. Blavatsky, is the statement that it is a portion of the Wisdom-Religion; that this Wisdom-Religion is the Source from which has sprung every great popular religion of all time, Brahmanism, Buddhism, Islamism, Judaism and Christianity included; that each of the great religions became in time corrupted and distorted out of all semblance to the original teachings of its Founder, thus rendering imperative a new and pure representation of the same "ancient, constant and eternal truths." Much of Isis Unveiled, the Secret Doctrine, and the other writings of H. P. Blavatsky are devoted to the proof of the identical nature of the original teachings of the great religions; to showing the gradual corruptions of those teachings, and to the evidences of the cyclic appearance of Messengers from the great Masters of the Wisdom-Religion in order to restore to mankind "that which was lost" through the perversion and degeneracy of the original teachings.

Something has made a wreck and a counterfeit out of Brahmanism, Buddhism, Christianity and all the other great teachings of which mankind has any record. If any of these teachings had remained amongst mankind pure, virile and untainted from its original

purity and strength, what necessity would exist for any re-presentations of the Wisdom-Religion? Every student knows, or should know, that the various popular religions are nothing but the shells from which the life has departed; they are one and all mere *Kamarupas,* devoid of all spirituality, whose only life is the factitious energy imparted to these spiritual corpses by the ignorant but sincere faith of their respective believers. Every student knows or should know that this spiritual decay and death has been brought about, not by enemies from without, but verily by those of its own household—by those false disciples and learners who, speaking in the name of the Master and his Teachings, have taught that which the Founder discountenanced, have done that which the Founder warned against. The Judases and the Peters of every great religion have been those within the fold.

Human nature has changed but little within recorded history and tradition. The enemies of true knowledge and true faith are to-day, as always, within ourselves. Is there any reason to suppose that the Teachings of Theosophy are exempt from the common enemies of mankind? Is there any reason to suppose that the vicissitudes of the Theosophical Movement of the nineteenth century will vary from those of former efforts of the Great Lodge of Masters? The Messengers of the Lodge came, did their work, and departed, leaving that work in the hands of the disciples. What have these done with that work in the years since H. P. Blavatsky and W. Q. Judge returned whence They came?

The original Theosophical Society was wrecked. Who wrecked it? The teachings of H. P. Blavatsky have been obscured. Who obscured them? Their robes have been stolen, their reputations calumniated. By whom? In the eyes of the world H. P. B. and W. Q. J. are frauds, forgers, charlatans and pretenders; Theosophy is associated in the public mind with the myriad delusions of spiritualism, psychic research, pseudo-occultism; and the sacred name of Master has been dragged in the dust of abuse and mockery. Who is responsible for these degradations?

Things good or evil do not produce themselves. Masters are responsible for the coming amongst men of H. P. Blavatsky and William Q. Judge. Masters are responsible for the teachings of these great Messengers, for the example They set, for the applications They showed. Theosophical students and theosophical societies are responsible for what have been done with the Teachings entrusted to them, for the spoliation of Theosophy and the Theosophical Movement. "In your hands, Brothers," wrote H. P. B. in her last Message before her death, "In your hands, Brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the coming century, and great as is the trust, so great also is the responsibility."

How have we answered to that trust and to that responsibility?

We declare that, due to the writings and actions of Annie Besant, H. S. Olcott, A. P. Sinnett, and others associated with them

and under their influence, as great a corruption and perversion of Theosophy has occurred in twenty-five years as has occurred in Buddhism in as many centuries; as great a popular misconception as has grown up in connection with Christianity in all the time since Christ. "Recent Theosophical Teachings" are a tissue of distortion, perversion and falsity.

Did Mr. Sinnett and the others named present their views to the world as spiritualism, as their own invention, as their own revelations, we would have naught to say except to consider them on their own merits or demerits. They do not so present them, but on the contrary claim for their hearing that they are Theosophy, and for themselves that they are teachers and exponents in communication with Masters and acting for Them.

Every genuine Theosophist who knows the facts is in sacred duty bound to do his utmost to expose these pretensions to knowledge and authority. Every sincere student of Theosophy owes it to himself to learn the facts. They are easily accessible to any one who desires to learn. And unless those who know the facts and all those who aspire to learn the facts, bestir themselves they will by default become accessories to the crime of the ages—"Do not let my last incarnation be a failure," was the dying admonition of H .P. B.

In our hands, Brothers, is placed in trust the welfare of the Theosophical Movement during the twentieth century. And great as is the trust, so great also is the responsibility.

THE WITNESS*

Shankara's Vivekachudamani: The Crest Jewel of Wisdom.—201-207.

THE MANIFEST AND THE HIDDEN SELF

BEGINNINGLESS is unwisdom, and all its works are too; but when wisdom is arisen, what belongs to unwisdom, although beginningless—

Like a dream on waking, perishes, root and all; though beginningless, it is not endless; it is as something that was not before, *and now is,* this is manifest.

It is thus seen that, though without a beginning, *unwisdom* comes to an end, just as something, which before was not, *comes into being.* Built up in the Self by its being bound by disguise of intellect—

Is this existence as the *separate* life, for there is no other than the Self, distinguished by its own nature, but the binding of the Self by the intellect is false, coming from unknowledge.

This binding is untied by perfect knowledge, not otherwise; the discerning of the oneness of the Eternal and the Self is held by the scripture to be perfect knowledge.

*Portion of an article printed by Wm. Q. Judge in the *Oriental Department* papers, January-February, 1896.

And this is accomplished by perfectly discerning between Self and not-Self; thereafter discernment is to be gained between individual and universal Self.

Water may be endlessly muddy, but when the mud is gone, the water is clear. As it shines, so shines the Self also, when faults are gone away, it shines forth clear.

And when unreality ceases to exist in the individual self, it is clear that it returns towards the universal; hence there is to be a rejection of the self-assertion and other characteristics of the individual self.

Hence this higher Self is not what is called the intellectual veil, because that is changeful, helpless of itself, circumscribed, objective, liable to err; the non-eternal cannot be regarded as eternal.

The bliss-formed veil is a form containing the reflection of bliss —although it is tainted with darkness; it has the quality of pleasure, the attainment of well wished-for aims; it shines forth in the enjoyment of good works by a righteous man, of its own nature bliss-formed; gaining an excellent form, he enjoys bliss without effort.

The principal sphere of the bliss-formed veil is in dreamless sleep; in dreaming and waking it is in part manifest when blissful objects are beheld.

Nor is this bliss-formed veil the higher Self, for it wears a disguise, it is a form of objective nature; it is an effect caused by good acts, accumulated in this changeful form.

When the five veils are taken away, according to inference and scripture, what remains after they are taken away is the Witness, in a form born of awakening.

This is the Self, self-shining, distinguished from the five veils; this is the Witness in the three modes *of perceiving,* without change, without stain. The wise should know it as Being and Bliss, as his own Self.

(*To be continued.*)

EXTRACTS FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE*

In reality the Moon is only the satellite of the Earth in one respect, viz., that physically the Moon revolves round the Earth. But in every other respect it is the Earth which is the satellite of the Moon, and not *vice versâ.* Startling as the statement may seem it is not without confirmation from scientific knowledge. It is evidenced by the tides, by the cyclic changes in many forms of disease which coincide with the lunar phases; it can be traced in the growth of plants, and is very marked in the phenomena of human gestation and conception.

* From the Original Edition, Vol. I, p. 180; see Vol. I, p. 202, Third Edition.

IS SUICIDE A CRIME?*

THE writer in the London *Spiritualist* for November, who calls the "Fragments of Occult Truth" speculation-spinning, can hardly, I think, apply that epithet to *Fragment* No. 3, so cautiously is the hypothesis concerning suicide advanced therein. Viewed in its general aspect, the hypothesis seems sound enough, satisfies our instincts of the Moral Law of the Universe, and fits in with our ordinary ideas as well as with those we have derived from science. The inference drawn from the two cases cited, *viz.*, that of the selfish suicide on the one hand, and of the unselfish suicide on the other, is that, although the after-states may vary, the result is invariably bad, the variation consisting only in the degree of punishment. It appears to me that, in arriving at this conclusion, the writer could not have had in his mind's eye all the possible cases of suicide, which do or may occur. For I maintain that in some cases self-sacrifice is not only justifiable, but also morally desirable, and that the result of such self-sacrifice cannot possibly be bad. I will put one case, perhaps the rarest of all rare cases, but not necessarily on that account a purely hypothetical one, for I KNOW at least one man, in whom I am interested, who is actuated with feelings, not dissimilar to these I shall now describe, and who would be deeply thankful for any additional light that could be thrown on this darkly mysterious subject.—(See *Editor's Note* 1.)

Suppose, then, that an individual, whom I shall call M., takes to thinking long and deep on the vexed questions of the mysteries of earthly existence, its aims, and the highest duties of man. To assist his thoughts, he turns to philosophical works: notably those dealing with the sublime teachings of Buddha. Ultimately he arrives at the conclusion that the FIRST and ONLY aim of existence is to be useful to our fellow men; that failure in this constitutes his own worthlessness as a sentient human being, and that by continuing a life of worthlessness he simply dissipates the energy which he holds in trust, and which, so holding, he has no right to fritter away. He tries to be useful, but—miserably and deplorably fails. What then is his remedy? Remember there is here "no sea of troubles" to "take arms against," no outraged human law to dread, no deserved earthly punishment to escape; in fact, there is no moral cowardice whatever involved in the self-sacrifice. M. simply puts an end to an existence which is useless, and which therefore fails of its own primary purpose. Is his act not justifiable? Or must he also be the victim of that transformation into *spook* and *pisacha*, against which *Fragment* No. 3 utters its dread warning? (2.)

Perhaps, M. may secure at the next birth more favourable conditions, and thus be better able to work out the purpose of Being. Well, he can scarcely be worse; for, in addition to his being inspired by a laudable motive to make way for one who might be

* This article was first printed by H. P. Blavatsky in *The Theosophist* for November, 1882. The series of articles, "Fragments of Occult Truth," were reprinted in THEOSOPHY, Vol. II, from January to October, 1914.

more serviceable, he has not, in this particular case, been guilty of any moral turpitude. (3.)

But I have not done. I go a step further and say that M. is not only useless, but positively mischievous. To his incapacity to do good, he finds that he adds a somewhat restless disposition which is perpetually urging him on *to make an effort* to do good. M. makes the effort—he would be utterly unworthy the name of man if he did not make it—and discovers that his incapacity most generally leads him into errors which convert the possible good into actual evil; that, on account of his nature, birth, and education, a very large number of men become involved in the effects of his mistaken zeal, and that the world at large suffers more from his existence than otherwise. Now, if, after arriving at such results, M. seeks to carry out their logical conclusion, *viz.*, that being morally bound to diminish the woes to which sentient beings on earth are subject, he should destroy himself, and by that means do the only good he is capable of; is there, I ask, any moral guilt involved in the act of anticipating death in such a case? I, for one, should certainly say not. Nay, more, I maintain, subject of course to correction by superior knowledge, that M. is not only justified in making away with himself, but that he would be a villain if he did not, at once and unhesitatingly, put an end to a life, not only useless, but positively pernicious. (4.)

M. may be in error; but supposing he dies cherishing the happy delusion that in death is all the good, in life all the evil he is capable of, are there in his case no extenuating circumstances to plead strongly in his favour, and help to avert a fall into that horrible abyss with which your readers have been frightened? (5.)

M.'s, I repeat, is no hypothetical case. History teems with instances of worthless and pernicious lives, carried on to the bitter end to the ruin of nations. Look at the authors of the French Revolution, burning with as ardent a love for their fellowmen as ever fired the human breast; look at them crimson with innocent blood, bringing unutterable disasters on their country in Liberty's sacred name! apparently how strong! in reality how pitifully weak! What a woeful result of incapacity has been theirs? Could they but have seen with M.'s eyes, would they not have been his prototypes? Blessed, indeed, had it been for France, if they had anticipated M.?

Again, look at George III. of England, a well-meaning, yet an incapable Sovereign, who, after reigning for a number of years, left his country distracted and impoverished by foreign wars, torn by internal dissensions, and separated from a kindred race across the Atlantic, with the liberties of his subjects trampled under foot, and virtue prostituted in the Cabinet, in Parliament and on the Hustings. His correspondence with Lord North and others abundantly proves that to his self-sufficiency, well-meaning though it be, must be traced the calamities of Great Britain and Ireland, calamities from the effects of which the United Kingdom has not yet fully recovered. Happy had it been for England if this ruler had, like M., seen the

uselessness of his life and nipped it, as M. might do, in the bud of its pernicious career! AN INQUIRER.

EDITOR'S NOTES.

(1.) "Inquirer" is not an Occultist, hence his assertion that in some cases suicide "is not only justifiable, but also morally desirable." No more than murder, is it ever justifiable, however desirable it may sometimes appear. The Occultist, who looks at the origin and the ultimate end of things, teaches that the individual—who affirms that any man, under whatsoever circumstances, is called to put an end to his life,—is guilty of as great an offense and of as pernicious a piece of sophistry, as the nation that assumes a right to kill in war thousands of innocent people under the pretext of avenging the wrong done to one. All such reasonings are the fruits of *Avidya* mistaken for philosophy and wisdom. Our friend is certainly wrong in thinking that the writer of *Fragments* arrived at his conclusions only because he failed to keep before his mind's eye all the possible cases of suicides. The result, in one sense, is certainly invariable; and there is but one general law or rule for all suicides. But, it is just because "the "after-states" vary *ad-infinitum,* that it is as erroneous to infer that this variation *consists only in the degree of punishment.* If the result will be *in every case* the necessity of living out the appointed period of sentient existence, we do not see whence "Inquirer" has derived his notion that "the result is invariably bad." The result is full of dangers; but there is hope for certain suicides, and even in many cases A REWARD IF LIFE WAS SACRIFICED TO SAVE OTHER LIVES *and that there was no other alternative for it.* Let him read para. 7, page 313, in the September THEOSOPHIST, and reflect. Of course, the question is simply generalised by the writer. To treat exhaustively of all and every case of suicide and their after-states would require a shelf of volumes from the British Museum's Library, not our *Fragments.*

(2.) No man, we repeat, has a right to put an end to his existence simply because it is useless. As well argue the necessity of inciting to suicide all the incurable invalids and cripples who are a constant source of misery to their families; and preach the moral beauty of that law among some of the savage tribes of the South Sea Islanders, in obedience to which they put to death with warlike honours, their old men and women. The instance chosen by "Inquirer" is not a happy one. There is a vast difference between the man who parts with his life in sheer disgust at constant failure to do good, out of despair of ever being useful, or even out of dread to do injury to his fellow-men by remaining alive; and one who gives it up voluntarily to save the lives either committed to his charge or dear to him. One is a half insane misanthrope—the other, a hero and a martyr. One *takes* away his life, the other *offers* it in sacrifice to philanthropy and to his duty. The captain who remains alone on board of a sinking ship; the man who gives up his place

in a boat that *will* not hold all, in favour of younger and weaker beings; the physician, the sister of charity, and nurse who stirs not from the bed-side of patients dying of an infectious fever; the man of science who wastes his life in brain-work and fatigue and *knows* he is so wasting it and yet is offering it day after day and night after night in order to discover some great law of the universe, the discovery of which may bring in its results some great boon to mankind; the mother that throws herself before the wild beast, that attacks her children, to screen and give them the time to fly; all these *are not suicides.* The impulse which prompts them thus to contravene the first great law of animated nature—the first instinctive impulse of which is to preserve life—is grand and noble. And, though all these *will* have to live in the *Kama Loka* their appointed life term, they are yet admired by all, and their memory will live honoured among the living for a still longer period. We all wish that, upon similar occasions, we may have courage so to die. Not so, surely in the case of the man instanced by "Inquirer." Notwithstanding his assertion that "there is no moral cowardice whatever involved" in such *self-sacrifice*—we call it decidedly "moral cowardice" and refuse it the name of sacrifice.

(3 and 4.) There is far more courage to live than to die in most cases. If "M." feels that he is "positively mischievous," let him retire to a jungle, a desert island; or, what is still better, to a cave or hut near some big city; and then, while living the life of a hermit, a life which would preclude the very possibility of doing mischief to any one, work, in one way or the other, for the poor, the starving, the afflicted. If he does that, no one can "become involved in the effects of his mistaken zeal," whereas, if he has the slightest talent, he can benefit many by simple manual labour carried on in as complete a solitude and silence as can be commanded under the circumstances. Anything is better—even being called a *crazy* philanthropist—than committing *suicide,* the most dastardly and cowardly of all actions, unless the *felo de se* is resorted to, in a fit of insanity.

(5.) "Inquirer" asks whether his "M." must also be victim of that transformation into *spook* and *pisacha!* Judging by the delineation given of his character, by his friend, we should say that, of all suicides, he is the most likely to become a séance-room *spook.* Guiltless "of any moral turpitude," he may well be. But, since he is afflicted with a "restless disposition which is perpetually urging him on *to make an effort* to do good"—here, on earth, there is no reason we know of, why he should lose that unfortunate disposition (unfortunate because of the constant failure)—in the *Kama Loka.* A "mistaken zeal" is sure to lead him on toward various mediums. Attracted by the strong magnetic desire of sensitives and spiritualists, "M." will probably feel "morally bound to diminish the woes to which these sentient beings (mediums and believers) are subject on earth," and shall once more *destroy,* not only himself, but his "affinities" the mediums.

SUICIDE IS NOT DEATH*

AS a student of Theosophy and human nature I have been interested in the discussion of the subject of self-murder to which *The World* has given a place in its columns. The eloquent agnostic, Col. Ingersoll, planted his views in the ground with the roots of them in the grave, giving the poor *felo de se* nothing beyond the cold earth to cheer him in his act, save perhaps the cowardly chance of escape, from responsibility or pain. Those who, as Nym Crinkle says, occupy themselves with replying to Col. Ingersoll fall back on the mere assertion that it is a sin to kill the body in which the Lord saw fit to confine a man. Neither of these views is either satisfactory or scientific.

If suicide is to be approved it can only be on the ground that the man is only a body, which, being a clod, may well be put out of its sufferings. From this it would be an easy step to justify the killing of other bodies that may be in the way, or old, or insane, or decrepit, or vicious. For if the mass of clay called body is all that we are, if man is not a spirit unborn and changeless in essence, then what wrong can there be in destroying it when you own it, or are it, and how easy to find good and sufficient reason for disposing similarly of others? The priest condemns suicide, but one may be a Christian and yet hold the opinion that a quick release from earth brings possible heaven several years nearer. The Christian is not deterred from suicide by any good reasons advanced in his religion, but rather from cowardice. Death, whenever natural or forced, has become a terror, is named "The King of Terrors." This is because, although a vague heaven is offered on the other side, life and death are so little understood that men had rather bear the ills they know than fly to others which are feared through ignorance of what those are.

Suicide, like any other murder is a sin because it is a sudden disturbance of the harmony of the world. It is a sin because it defeats nature. Nature exists for the sake of the soul and for no other reason, it has the design, so to say, of giving the soul experience and self-consciousness. These can only be had by means of a body through which the soul comes in contact with nature, and to violently sever the connection before the natural time defeats the aim of nature, for the present compelling her, by her own slow processes to restore the task left unfinished. And as those processes must go on through the soul that permitted the murder, more pain and suffering must follow.

And the disturbance of the general harmony is a greater sin than most men think. They consider themselves alone, as separate, as not connected with others. But they are connected throughout the whole world with all other souls and minds. A subtle, actual, powerful, band links them all together, and the instant one of all

*This article, reproduced from the New York *World*, is reprinted from The *Lamp*, Toronto, of September, 1894.

these millions disturbs the link the whole mass feels it by reaction through soul and mind, and can only return to a normal state through a painful adjustment. This adjustment is on the unseen, but all-important, planes of being in which the real man exists. Thus each murderer of self or of another imposes on entire humanity an unjustifiable burden. From this injustice he cannot escape, for his body's death does not cut him off from the rest; it only places him, deprived of nature's instruments, in the clutch of laws that are powerful and implacable, ceaseless in their operation and compulsory in their demands.

Suicide is a huge folly, because it places the committer of it in an infinitely worse position than he was in under the conditions from which he foolishly hoped to escape. It is not death. It is only a leaving of one well-known house in familiar surroundings to go into a new place where terror and despair alone have place. It is but a preliminary death done to the clay, which is put in the "cold embrace of the grave," leaving the man himself naked and alive, but out of mortal life, and not in either heaven or hell.

The Theosophist sees that man is a complex being full of forces and faculties, which he uses in a body on earth. The body is only a part of his clothing; he himself lives also in other places. In sleep he lives in one, awake in another, in thought in another. He is a threefold being of body, soul and spirit. And this trinity can be divided again into its necessary seven constituents. And just as he is threefold, so also is nature—material, psychical or astral, and spiritual. The material part of nature governs the body, the psychical affects the soul and the spirit lives in the spiritual, all being bound together. Were we but bodies, we might well commit them to material nature and the grave, but if we rush out of the material we must project ourselves into the psychical or astral. And as all nature proceeds with regularity under the government of law, we know that each combination has its own term of life before a natural and easy separation of the component parts can take place. A tree or a mineral or a man is a combination of elements or parts, and each must have its projected life term. If we violently and prematurely cut them off one from the other, certain consequences must ensue. Each constituent requires its own time for dissolution. A suicide being a violent destruction of the first element—body—the other two, of soul and spirit, are left without their natural instrument. The man then is but half dead, and is compelled by the law of his own being to wait until the natural term is reached.

The fate of the suicide is horrible in general. He has cut himself off from his body by using mechanical means that affect the body, but cannot touch the real man. He then is projected into the astral world, for he has to live somewhere. There the remorseless law, which acts really for his good, compels him to wait until he can properly die. Naturally he must wait, half dead, the months or years which, in the order of nature, would have rolled over him before body and soul and spirit could rightly separate. He becomes

a shade; he lives in purgatory, so to say, called by the Theosophist the "place of desire and passion," or "Kama Loca." He exists in the astral realm entirely, eaten up by his own thoughts. Continually repeating in vivid thoughts the act by which he tried to stop his life's pilgrimage, he at the same time sees the people and the place he left, but is not able to communicate with any one except, now and then, with some poor sensitive, who often is frightened by the visit. And often he fills the minds of living persons who may be sensitive to his thoughts with the picture of his own taking off, occasionally leading them to commit upon themselves the act of which he was guilty.

To put it theosophically, the suicide has cut himself off on one side from the body and life which were necessary for his experience and evolution, and on the other from his spirit, his guide and "Father in heaven." He is composed now of astral body, which is of great tensile strength, informed and inflamed by his passions and desires. But a portion of his mind, called manas, is with him. He can think and perceive, but, ignorant of how to use the forces of that realm, he is swept hither and thither, unable to guide himself. His whole nature is in distress, and with it to a certain degree the whole of humanity, for through the spirit all are united. Thus he goes on, until the law of nature acting on his astral body, that begins to die, and then he falls into a sleep from which he awakens in time for a season of rest before beginning once more a life on earth. In his next reincarnation he may, if he sees fit, retrieve or compensate or suffer over again.

There is no escape from responsibility. The "sweet embrace of the wet clay" is a delusion. It is better to bravely accept the inevitable, since it must be due to our errors in other older lives, and fill every duty, try to improve all opportunity. To teach suicide is a sin, for it leads some to commit it. To prohibit it without reason is useless, for our minds must have reasons for doing or not doing. And if we literally construe the words of the Bible, then there we find it says no murderer has a place but in hell. Such constructions satisfy but few in an age of critical investigation and hard analysis. But give men the key to their own natures, show them how law governs, both here and beyond the grave, and their good sense will do the rest. An illogical nepenthe of the grave is as foolish as an illogical heaven for nothing.—WILLIAM Q. JUDGE, in New York *World*.

FROM THE SECRET DOCTRINE*

The *breath* of heaven, or rather the breath of life, called in the Bible *Nephesh*, is in every animal, in every animate speck as in every mineral atom. But none of these has, like man, the consciousness of the nature of that highest Being, as none has that divine harmony in its form which man possesses.

* From the Original Edition, Vol. I, p. 212; see Vol. I, p. 233, Third Edition.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

At the meetings of the United Lodge of Theosophists a part of the time is devoted to Question and Answer. The questions and answers that follow were taken stenographically while "The Ocean of Theosophy," by Wm. Q. Judge, was being studied.

It should be remembered that while the answers are given from the standpoint of many years' experience and application, they are not to be taken as hard and fast definitions, nor as authoritative; but may be used as explanations and applications of the philosophy of Theosophy as related to the particular phases presented in the various questions. Each student, being "the final authority" for himself, should not accept any statement by any being whatever unless he himself perceives its truth.

Beginning with Chapter I of the "Ocean," the succeeding chapters will be taken up seriatim.

CHAPTER VIII.

THIS chapter and the following one deal with reincarnation. While the word "reincarnation" is in very general use these days, having filtered into the public mind from Theosophic teachings, there still exists a lamentable ignorance in regard to its scope and meaning. A very common idea is that the "personality" reincarnates, but there could hardly be a more unphilosophical, illogical, and obviously incorrect one. Some spiritualists, dogmatic Christians, and even minds of a materialistic bent have adopted the word and given it their own peculiar applications, so that when one of these says "I believe in reincarnation", little or no knowledge of "What reincarnates" is most likely to be found. The world therefore needs students who learn correctly and apply their knowledge, so that in time by their numbers and knowledge, the true understanding may filter through to those less learned. We are students, it is true, but from the very first we can and should be teachers to those who know still less than we do; we can tell what we know, but we should be very careful that we are so well informed that we will not convey false impressions. Chapters VIII, IX, and X, are devoted to Reincarnation, and Chapter XI, to Karma; these two doctrines are what the world most needs, and we as students should devote ourselves to a full understanding of them for the sake of others, as well as our own understanding and progress.

Q. If the law of reincarnation is just, why is it that the Jewish race has been so persecuted?

A. In considering any question of experience we have first of all to take into account the Law of Karma—action and re-action, or sowing and reaping; this on the face of it cannot be anything else but exact justice. Reincarnation is *the result* of karmic action, and also offers the opportunity to set better causes in motion. If selfishness rules in any one life, evil causes are set in motion the results

of which must be adjusted either in that life or a following one. The tendency of selfishness is to increase with each incarnation, and if a people or individuals continue in that course, they will continually injure others and bring about their own re-actions at the hands of those injured. So if we find any people particularly marked out for persecution, we may be sure that as egos in other times they had been the offenders and are reaping what they sowed.

Q. What was it that began evolution?

A. The course of Being is an *ever*-becoming. Ever-becoming is endless, therefore beginningless. This solar system and its planets of course had a beginning and will have an ending, but every manifestation is but a further becoming of that which had been. Periods of Manifestation and Non-Manifestation succeed each other in Infinite Space, to which neither beginning nor ending can be applied (see the Second Fundamental Proposition of the *Secret Doctrine*). The ancient way of stating any beginning is "The Desire first arose in It": It referring to *Spirit*, which is the cause and sustainer of all that was, is, or shall be. There is a beginning to the first glimmerings of external consciousness, which ever tends to widen in its range of perception and manifestation until it encompasses and becomes at one with All; Potential Spirit having become Potent Intelligence. The ending of the process results in a new beginning based upon the totality of intelligence attained. Whatever begins in time ends in time. Time is due to perceptions of Consciousness; as the *Secret Doctrine* says, "Time is an illusion produced by the procession of events before our consciousness"; beginnings and endings pertain to that "illusion", and not to the beginningless and endless Spirit which is the Perceiver. As the *Gita* says, "The Spirit in the body is called Maheswara, the great Lord, the Spectator, the admonisher, the sustainer, the enjoyer, and also the Paramatma, the highest soul"; itself without beginning or ending, it makes beginnings and endings in manifestations, which as manifestations are beginningless and endless in their turn.

Q. What does it mean on page 68 where it says, "And as all the matter which the human Ego gathered to it retains the stamp or photographic impression of the human being, the matter transmigrates to the lower level when given an animal impress by the Ego?

A. Mr. Judge had been explaining how the erroneous idea of the transmigration of souls to the animal kingdom had arisen. The substance which composes our astral and physical bodies is the embodiment of innumerable small "lives"; while we use these "lives" as points of contact with the astral and physical world, we at the same time impress them with our feelings, whether these be low or high, and when the "lives" depart from our bodies to be replaced by others, as is continually being done, the impress we have given them will carry them to whatever kingdom the impress is related to. According to the impress we give these "lives" we advance or retard evolution.

Q. If there is an inharmonious condition of the lives in the body, do they attack proportionately every life within that body, or only certain organs?

A. Any inharmony in the body disturbs the whole. There is not only obstruction, but a vitiation of the bodily processes in a progressive way if the cause of the diseased condition is not found, and causal and remedial measures are not adopted.

Q. It has been found in post-mortem examinations that every tissue in the body is affected.

A. That would naturally follow because of the circulatory system. The blood is representative of, and carries with it, an essence from all the organs; any unhealthy organ distributes vitiation throughout the body.

Q. The lives of the lower kingdoms go back to their own kingdoms on the dissolution of the body. Would that not be retrogression? What is the Karma of those lives?

A. It would be a mistake to suppose that the lives which compose our bodies go back to their respective kingdoms only on the dissolution of the body; there is a constant coming and going during our lifetime, through the food and in other ways. The "lives" are not the same when they go as when they come; they may remain on the human plane or may go to lower kingdoms according to the impress given them by the human being. It is the impress given them that determines their destination; the Karma is that of the human being who gave the impress and impulse; the retrogression—if it may be so-called—is due to the human being. The "lives" having no sense of responsibility nor volition are not karmically responsible; their nature is action, but action under impulsion; their degree of consciousness is not changed, but their modes of action may be. Retrogression applies to consciousness, not to form; for example, a being in human *form* may ascend to divine heights or descend below the brute in *consciousness*.

Q. Does Man use the same material or lives over and over again?

A. He uses the same *kind* of lives, those that are of the same nature as his tendencies. "Lives" that he has used and impressed may be in other forms of the human kingdom, or in lower kingdoms as the case may be. There is a constant interchange going on, like attracting like.

Q. Then Man really can change the nature of the lives which compose his body?

A. If he could not, he would be at the mercy of his body—subject to its condition. We know that good habits can be acquired through thought and effort in those directions; similarly with bad habits; these changes are due to the impress given the lives in our body by Thought, Feeling and Effort. But the body is the least of our troubles. Were our thoughts based upon the Eternal Verities, our efforts would be for true understanding and right purpose; the bodily conditions would follow in due course. If our thoughts are

concerned with the body, the possibilities are very limited, because of the limitation of thought to the bodily plane.

Q. The chapter speaks of the "personality"; will we have the same personality again?

A. The word "Personality" comes from the Latin word "Persona"—a mask, by means of which we conceal or express our inward feelings. It is the inner ideas, and feelings—the general character—that is meant by the word "personality": the latter is in a constant state of change, whether that be great or small. The "way we used to think and feel" is not "as we feel now or think". The personality in the next life, will be made up of tendencies engendered in past lives with the addition of those of the present one, subject to the conditions into which those tendencies have brought us; those conditions may include change in sex, condition and environment. The feeling of "identity" that all have is not due to the body or its environment, but to the Egoic nature of each.

Q. Why do they condemn reincarnation in the Christian churches?

A. Because they have followed the lead of the Church Fathers who anathematized the doctrine in the early centuries of the Christian Era. There is evidence throughout the Old and New Testament that Reincarnation was a doctrine generally accepted; the Jews were constantly expecting "the return" of their prophets, that is, the reëmbodiment or reincarnation of one who had occupied a body before. In the New Testament there are a number of allusions to it, such as that when the disciples asked where is the prophet Elias who was expected to come before Jesus, and Jesus replied that Elias had been with them, but they knew him not, and the disciples knew "that he spake of John the Baptist".

Q. What did Christ mean when He said He brought not Peace but a Sword?

A. It is stated in the New Testament that he said these words. We must remember all the time that the one known as Jesus left no writings, and that all we know of him is contained in writings of men who are presumed to have heard the words and correctly inscribed them. We are therefore not in a position to know that anything written about Jesus is correctly transcribed; we can only interpret such sayings on the basis of the general character of the teachings of Jesus. It is evident from the records found, that some One in the world of men had uttered the doctrines generally ascribed to Jesus; there is no historical evidence, however, of the existence of such an one at the time agreed upon by the Christian world. None of these things militate against the truth and merit of such sayings as are reputed to have been uttered by him; the truth and the merit must lie in the *sayings themselves*, and not in the identity of the one who said them. We have to compare, for instance, the statement that Jesus came to bring "peace on earth and good-will towards men" with the one which says he came not to bring peace but a sword, and endeavor to reconcile them. If, as the teachings ascribed to him

show, he taught Charity, Forgiveness and an all-inclusive altruism, together with a recognition of the divinity in all, what could he have meant by "the sword", an implement of destruction? The records regarding his sayings and acts point to a struggle against the false religions of the day; the overturning of the tables of the money-changers in the temple; the violation of the prevailing ideas in regard to the Sabbath day and other acts bespeak a war against false conceptions. Further—as a divine incarnation—he must have known what would follow from a misunderstanding and misuse of his teachings, for he spoke of that generation as perverse and wicked, and that while his mission was intended to bring peace, its misunderstanding and misuse would bring its opposite, the sword. In connection with this, is it not a fact that wherever Christianity has gone, a sword has accompanied it? And is it not before our eyes at this time that the world-war was brought about by and fought between so-called Christian nations? We must conclude then that the saying was a true one, and that while his mission was one of peace and good will, mankind has done and is doing to his teachings what they did to his body and his clothing: They "divided his garments among them, and for his vesture cast lots". His "garments" is a symbol for his teachings, and his vesture for *"his name."*

AFTER DEATH STATES

III.

IT must be evident from what has been stated that what we call simply "man" is a highly complex being. The constituents of his nature are seven-fold, though they all spring from, exist in, and are, basically, undissevered portions of one everlasting Unity. This seven-fold nature may, for the purpose in hand, be reduced to three main factors as corresponding to the familiar spirit, soul and body of our habitual Western phraseology. The greater Nature, of which each being is an integral part, may be treated in the same way, since every constituent of every being, high or low, is drawn from Nature.

As we have stated, Man and his three higher sheaths of the soul may be taken as one and called the Spiritual being or Ego, and this is the continuing, reincarnating entity which passes from body to body, from state to state whether of consciousness or substance. And since Man is only a replica or part of Great Nature it follows that there are corresponding worlds of action, form and substance in which such Spiritual Existences live and move and have their being, however intangible, formless and subjective such worlds may appear to us.

Man, therefore, in a spiritual, that is, permanent, sense is actually a Being of such grandeur and power as scarcely even to

be imagined by us in our most exalted moments. As such, he is the highest and the controlling force in all evolution. It is Man in this sense that is dimly shadowed in the Angels and Archangels, the Principles and Powers, the Divine Beings spoken of in all religions. And when such a Spiritual Man incarnates amongst human beings he is looked upon as a God or Savior. Yet such men, under the rule of law inherent in all nature and in any adequate conception of eternal Justice, could only be the perfected product of human and all evolution.

As the whole philosophy of Occultism is based upon the theorem of the Unity of all in Nature, its scientific viewpoint is that of a living and conscious universe, with no dead or unconscious "matter" anywhere; no "blind" or unintelligent "law" anywhere, but an endless progression of conscious units or Lives ever-evolving under the rule of law inherent in the whole. Any body or form is but a collection of these Lives drawn together by the attractive power of a higher form of consciousness. "Matter," in the definition of the Wisdom-Religion, is everywhere and always that totality of manifested existences which is capable of perception in any world and on any plane.

The three higher sheaths of the soul of man are composed of Lives of a nature so nearly homogeneous as to be instantly and entirely plastic to the nature of the Spiritual Ego. Not so with the lower sheaths. The coarsest of these, the physical body, is in a continual state of dissolution and requires more or less constant attention to maintain it even for the brief period of a single incarnation. This is built up from food drawn from the kingdoms below physical man, and all such food undergoes a tremendous transformation, or metempsychosis, before it is fitted to become the body of man. The vital, astral, and kamic or psychic sheaths are drawn in the same way from the matter of the appropriate planes in Nature. These planes of life, being, action and substance are either altogether unknown and unbelieved in by us, although we are constantly using them and being affected by them, or we know of them only by hearsay through the bewildering and conflicting reports regarding mediumship, psychic research, hypnotism, mesmerism, insanity, delirium, necromancy, witchcraft, telepathy, "magic," "miracles" and all the immense range of phenomena partly physical and partly metaphysical. Our dreams and our sleep are no less a part of these phenomena. The truth is that they all spring, like all the other "phenomena" of our existence, awake, asleep, alive or "dead," from the conscious and unconscious exercise of the powers inherent in all nature and in ourselves.

We think that in some mysterious and recondite way evolution proceeds from the lowest to the highest, whereas, in the teachings of Occultism, the force which is behind all evolution is that of the highest forms of consciousness impelling and urging on all the lower forms. How is this achieved? Humanity is itself the answer and

the illustration of the law and of the process. Says the *Bhagavad-Gita*, voicing the two poles of the process: "This Spirit enters the earth, supporting all living things by its power. It is that property of sap which is taste, nourishing all the herbs and plants of the field. Becoming the internal fire of the living, it associates with the upward and downward breathing, and causing the *four kinds of food to digest*. It is in the hearts of all men, and from it come memory, knowledge, *and also the loss of both*." This is the portion of the march of evolution studied and believed in by modern science, which sees the progression of life, form and intelligence (with a few "missing links"), but does not perceive the impelling Spirit, because of the loss of memory and knowledge of higher states. So all it can study is the phenomena of evolution from atom to man.

But the same Gita gives the other pole of evolution in these words: "It is even a portion of the Supreme Spirit which, having assumed life in *this* world of conditioned existence, draweth together the five senses and the mind, in order that it may obtain a body and may leave it again. The deluded do not see the Spirit when it quitteth or remains in the body, but those who have the *eye of wisdom* perceive it, and devotees who industriously strive to do so see it dwelling in their own hearts; whilst those who have not overcome themselves, who are devoid of discrimination, see it not even though they strive thereafter."

There is a world of meaning, philosophical and strictly scientific no less than ethical and moral, in these statements. All beings are spiritual in their essential and enduring nature; they differ infinitely in their respective degrees of Intelligence, and to these differing intelligences are due all the varieties of form and action in the visible and invisible worlds. The higher beings are homogeneous in knowledge, nature and power. They *educate*—the word means to awaken and draw out—the lower and less intelligent in a manner analogous to the power of the sun to awaken and draw out the dormant life and activity of this earth and of all the forms of which it is composed. They cannot be said to "incarnate" in the four lower kingdoms any more than the sun can be said to "incarnate" on earth, but their power irradiates, influences and makes possible that "natural impulse" which constitutes the driving power of all the lower forms of existence on this and other planes. When the influence of this Spirit is withdrawn or expelled from any form the form dissipates and the lives which composed it return to their own homogeneous state.

But into the body of physical, animal man, the highest product of evolution seen from below upwards, can enter, and does enter, a still higher form of Intelligence, unknown *per se* to us, and this higher form blended and interwoven at every point with the three lower sheaths, constitutes a psycho-physiological form capable of such an enormous range of conscious use as to make it a partially fit instrument for self-conscious spiritual beings to inhabit. *Man* is

that very self-conscious Spiritual Ego who enters, or rather overshadows and partially enters as yet this four-fold entity. His union, partial or complete, with it makes the human being we call man, and constitutes his personal, waking existence on earth.

The "birth" of a child can thus be seen to be the union of consciousness of three great degrees of Intelligence, spiritual, mental, and physical. "Soul" and "mind" are conjoined in the body, and so long as this conjunction endures the "human" being lives. Upon the ceasing of the conjuncture of these more or less discordant elements "death" ensues, and all that remains is the "body" severed from soul and mind. Shorn of the attractive, directive and sustaining force of soul and mind the lives of the body revert by degrees to their own states of being and enter into other combinations, their own degree of intelligence reinforced by the impressions gained through contact with the higher forms which ensouled them.

Death is only the reversal of the process of birth. For a little time the Spiritual Ego remains encompassed by the remaining principles freighted also with the experiences gained in the life just past. His condition may be likened to that of a living man, minus a body, and plunged into a profound "brown study," or absorbing dream. It is, however, no "dream" to him, but an intense "reality;" so intense that he himself is entirely unaware of the "great change." What during life in the body had passed into "memories" or been "forgotten," now become, not memories, but living, moving active realities. In the sensitive *rupa,* or form composed of astral substance, his thoughts, feelings and desires amassed during earth-life become to him real beings. They are of the "stuff dreams are made of;" not the memory of "living pictures" that we associate in the waking brain with a vivid dream, but that dream itself, intensified, as we experienced it *while dreaming.* Only, in this case, there is no awakening in the morning and the saying of "I dreamed last night."

This form of existence continues for a variable period with the ordinary "man," depending upon the "faith" and nature of the earthly life just closed. It may last from a few months to many years. It might be called a psychic existence pure and simple. But in the end the discordant nature of the amassed experiences now being *re-lived* compels a "second death," or further separation of the "principles" or sheaths of the soul. All that was "earthly, sensual, devilish," to quote the language of Saint James, or the "psychic body," to use the language of Saint Paul, falls off.

The transition is gradual, as is, in fact the coming on of normal physical "death." Nor is the Spiritual being himself any more aware of the second great change than of the first, for, with the gradual subsidence of the life-activity of the lower sheaths, unnourished by further impressions of earthly-existence, the deeper thoughts, feelings and unsatisfied longings for love and bliss gain in intensity. As the period of the "second death" approaches the

spiritual Ego becomes far more completely, because far more joyously, immersed in the glorious fabric of pure thought, feeling and imagination. When the combined lower sheaths, the *Kama-rupa*, drops off he is no more aware of the transition than we are of the unconscious departure of the "mind" from one subject or object to another more attractive.

In this state, the *Devachan* of Theosophical teachings and the "heaven" of the various religions and religious sects, the Ego is utterly out of contact and means of contact with any inharmonious elements. All that he longed for during "life" that was "pure, holy and of good report," all that his hopes and highest aspirations conceived of during life as the ideal of existence, personal and spiritual, here find their fruition. They form the *substance* from which he creates and re-creates by the power of the spiritual imagination a world of his own, populous with real beings and real life: to him. It is, again, a "dream" existence only in a conventional sense. It is so real that nothing and no one can rouse him to a perception that it is self-created and self-sustained and but a passing phase of his eternal pilgrimage. No one can rouse him but one whose Wisdom is such that even the divine illusion of a Devachanee cannot suspend even for a moment his discrimination between the eternal and the non-eternal. And such an one is too wise to disturb the spiritual repose and well earned bliss of the Pilgrim.

It is evident that the waking man can discriminate between relativities, not merely in the objects, actions, and subjects of the waking state of consciousness, but between states of consciousness themselves. The waking man *knows* that he is awake, and knows that he has been in the dream state and the deep sleep state. But the *same man* in the dreaming state is unaware either that he *has been* awake, or that he *is now* in dream state, and by analogy we should be able to infer that in what we call deep sleep the same man is unaware either that he has been awake, or that he has been dreaming.

Why is this? What is the explanation of the fact?

On the understanding of the rationale of the process of transition from one state of consciousness to another and back again is conditioned the whole possibility of comprehension of after death states as normally experienced by the reincarnating Ego. Outside of Occultism there is nothing but a confused and contradictory mass of testimony as to facts and their meanings, because there is no knowledge. But the teachings of Occultism reduce the whole chaos to order, sequence, understanding, because Occultism *knows* the laws, the processes, the principles involved, not merely some chaotic facts and phenomena.

In the *Kama-loka* immediately following death the Ego is more immersed in the—to us—subjective condition and experiences of that state than we are in our daily waking life. We have the contrast of the relativities, partially at least, of two states, waking and dreaming. He has *no contrast of states of consciousness*. And for reasons. He has no physical body and *cannot* sense our waking,

objective world because he has no instrument of contact. With the ceasing entire of that contact his only background of consciousness is the world of accumulated sensations which instantly become his foreground; that is, they become objective to him. And, normally, there is here that absorption in the beings of his sensations and thought, free from the distraction of contact with a succession of external objects and images, which to the waking man is only remotely possible even in dream state.

In Devachan the absorption is rendered still more profound and unreachable from without because of the concordant nature of all the beings and elements of his creative imagination. The Ego is not only minus a physical body; he is also devoid of all the remaining lower sheaths of the soul whose combined impressions, powers and functioning drown with their clamor the finer life of the Spiritual being in waking earthly existence. The impressions of earthly memory, imagination, sensations, desires and thoughts are so powerful, and so constantly added to by every contact and action of waking life, that they seem *the only reality* to the "living" man. It is but rarely that the roar of the waking consciousness dies down enough for the "still, small Voice of the Silence" to be more than a dim feeling of longing and aspiration for higher and more enduring things. The whole concentration is upon outward things and the sensations derived from them. Only the sharp and oft-times violent contrasts between pleasure and pain, good and evil give momentary intervals in which we strive to "pierce the veil."

The devachanic existence of the Ego lasts for great periods of time when contrasted with the span of earthly life, for there is lacking all that friction of discordant elements which is the cause of the shortness of human life as well as of its pains. By reason of that very absence, moreover, there is no time element to the Ego in this happy and bliss filled state, for "time" in a metaphysical and spiritual sense, is the *succession of the states of consciousness*, and the state of the Ego in devachan is continuous because homogeneous. Nevertheless, a stage comes when the substance amassed in the preceding earth life is exhausted. The declension is gradual, for nature, as we know, never proceeds by leaps and bounds, but by infinite gradations.

Upon the exhaustion of the "hold" upon the soul of the "mental deposits" of the former life the Spiritual Ego has his "moment" of *real* awakening when, freed from the illusions even of devachan, he sees and knows the immense reach and realm of his evolutionary past and future. The divine purpose which inspired him as a free spiritual being at the commencement of this globe to take on "man's" form in the flesh in order to aid and urge on the progress of his younger brothers—this divine motive again becomes clear to him. Like a diver for pearls in the ocean he leaves his own element and cleaving to his Karmic duty, dives down once more into the vast ocean of "life." And another "child of earth" is born.

(*To be continued*)

AROUND THE TABLE

READING the newspaper at the breakfast table is *taboo* in our Family. Mother insists that we ought to be awake, cheerful and *visible* at the morning meal, and maintains that no person can be truly visible when buried, metaphorically or otherwise, in the pages of the daily print.

The sound reasoning of this argument, together with a certain regard that the other members of the Family hold towards her, incline them to full acceptance of Mother's conclusions. Doctor has evolved the plan, however, of arriving on the scene some ten minutes in advance of the scheduled breakfast hour and employing this time in a hurried gathering of the morning's news over a cup of coffee. The result is seen in the timely character of our morning table talk—and in the clear net gain to a certain professional man of a "second cup" that might otherwise be questioned.

"Well, the world do move", pronounced Doctor enthusiastically one morning recently as the Family seated themselves.

"It sure do", affirmed Student flippantly, "but why assault our intelligence with such a tremendous fact thus early in the morning, Father?"

"National prohibition's carried", went on Doctor, paying no attention to his saucy little daughter, who managed to remain cheerful even though ignored. "Who would have believed it possible?"

"They'll have their hands full in enforcing the law", remarked Spinster, who had once taught in a prohibition state and had fought the practice of some of her High School boys of carrying manfully their pocket flasks of whiskey.

"A great advance, isn't it?", said Mother hopefully. "Think how the women and children will benefit, with liquor out of the world!"

"Yes, it looks like a good move", agreed Doctor, "but at that it's a question", he added thoughtfully. "In my own experience as a citizen, and a physician too, 'prohibition' does not prohibit; and some of the most pitiful and truly awful cases I have met with were attributable indirectly to prohibitory laws, in causing confirmed drinkers to seek drugs and other substitutes in trying to satisfy uncontrollable cravings. As you all know", Doctor continued earnestly, "I have no use for liquor—haven't employed it in my practice for many years, and find plenty of other resources available if a patient requires a stimulant. In fact, medical practice in general has shown a great advance in these directions during the past twenty years"—and then the Doctor paused uncertainly as if he were not quite so sure of the "advance", when he once began to cogitate upon it.

"Prohibition is impractical anyway", declared Spinster, with a positive shake of her head.

"But we don't *know* that", objected Mother, "because it's never really been tried before. We have had local prohibition and state prohibition, but this is *national* prohibition, getting right to the liquor producing sources of the whole country. What do you think of it, Mentor?" she added, turning to her old friend, who was observing Mother's warm earnestness with a loving if somewhat whimsical smile.

"I haven't thought of it at all as something epoch-making and momentous, if that is what you mean", answered Mentor. "But at least it will give folks a chance to test out thoroughly the value of prohibitory legislation—since we seem to think, as a people, we have not yet had that chance."

"Just what do you mean, please Mentor, by the last part of that remark?" asked Spinster, curiously.

"Merely this, my dear", was the answer, "that we already *have* all sorts of legal prohibitions in every direction, and that they do not, have not and will not prohibit anybody from doing what he has determined to do. We prohibit murder, but murders are committed; we prohibit theft, but thefts continue; we prohibit immorality, but immorality is everywhere; we prohibit dishonesty in various forms, but most of us are not even honest with ourselves."

"Then you would have no laws, Mentor", broke out Student, "why, that's anarchy!"

"Hold on now, young lady", said Mentor, laughing, "*you* are the one who said that! But isn't that which has been said quite true, and not in the least exaggerated? Our whole social and legal structure is full of 'thou shalt *nots*'—even our religions. What we need is fewer of these and more 'thou *shalts*'. Then the whole trend will be in the direction of affirmative action rather than in that of negative prohibition. We have not yet reached that stage of enlightenment as a people where we can live without laws, but at best many of these laws are mere crutches that we can abandon when crippled humanity gets healthily onto its own feet.

"So further prohibitions", continued Mentor, "are not acclaimed with unmixed joy by the deeper students of life. They always serve to entrench the false old negative doctrine of 'be *good*' of which we are so fond. To *be* good is no proper object in existence. If we will but strive to *do* good, there will be no question of the negative virtues—they will take care of themselves."

"But Theosophy tells us not to use intoxicants", objected Student, somewhat illogically.

"With all due regard to your good intentions, Student", replied Mentor with a smile, "Theosophy tells nothing of the sort. Theosophy is not a system of diet, nor of prohibitions; it is a philosophy of life, a statement of the laws that govern all the constituents of man and nature. Among other things it shows that the use of intoxicants is prejudicial to the progress of the student, but it is the student himself who determines what he shall do, or shall not do.

He learns of the philosophy and makes, or refrains making, his own applications. He must control and be responsible for his own volitions—thus he learns, and there is no other way."

"I think I see just what you mean, Mentor", said Mother with a sigh, "but how about the thousands of innocent women and children who suffer from the effects of the liquor traffic?"

Mentor looked at her earnestly. "Do you believe in Karma, Mother?" he asked her quietly; and upon noting her affirmative nod he continued, "The truly *innocent* do not suffer—that is taking a superficial view, you see. Law *does* rule in the universe, and we all *do* reap what we sow. The drunkard's wife earned that kind of a husband, and his child that kind of parent and environment. We are not here in physical existence for the first time—not any of us; and in this life with its environments and relationships we are meeting the effects of causes set in motion by ourselves in previous existences. We *should* try to relieve; we should feel pity and extend aid in every possible way; but we must not lack faith in the reign of law, nor doubt that Law is justice and mercy in one. As Mr. Judge once wrote, 'Your faith will know that *all* is provided for'—that is a good sentence for the sincere student of life to bear in mind."

"But what would you suggest in place of prohibition, Mentor?" asked Doctor, who had finished breakfast and was about to go.

"Education", was the answer.

"It's too slow", said Doctor.

"That's the individual's fault", replied Mentor. "He will learn by his mistakes."

"Then prohibition is no good!"

Such a wholesale condemnation is not wise", answered Mentor. "It may be one of the steps through which we will learn better methods of teaching."

"But isn't the *principle* wrong?" asked Spinster thoughtfully.

"Exactly", was the answer, "a small majority *forces* a large minority to do something it doesn't want to do. Speaking largely, that way of doing things does not bring about the best results. But now we're getting into a talk on government, and the like, and that won't do at this early hour of a busy day", Mentor added, with a smile.

"Let us watch the course of events", he continued, "and try to learn something from them; and hope that good will flow from the experiment, and a better basis of conduct result. We must remember that the better the conditions provided, the higher the Ego to be attracted to them. Egos may be awaiting incarnation until this very step has been taken. Another generation will show the truth of this; but meantime let us learn, test for ourselves, and try to spread true and right ideas, so that open minds can catch them and use them as opportunity offers."

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

COULD H. P. B. HAVE CURED HER ILLNESS?

Q. If H. P. B. had any powers, and knew anything at all about Nature's laws, why did she permit her body to become ill, diseased, painful, when she could have cured it easily and lived many years longer?

A. There can be no question as to H. P. B.'s powers, for they are well-known to many and are well-attested; nor can any doubt be thrown upon her knowledge, if what she has given the world of men is studied and applied. The question therefore resolves itself into, "Why did she not use those powers and her knowledge to relieve her body and prolong her life?"

As she *had* both knowledge and power, the answer must be considered in the light of *an application of both* as regards her body. She was not an ordinary person, but, in our opinion, one of that class of beings known as "divine incarnations", of which perhaps the best example known to the Western world is that of Jesus of Nazareth. It was said of him, that "he became in all things like unto us", which means that he occupied a body of the race, subject to the limitations of bodies of that time. He was not that body, the latter being but an instrument borrowed from that people. Another phrase, "He took upon himself the sins of the world" *in his body,* the body being the product of racial "sins" arising from false conceptions and wrong actions; in other words he accepted the karma of the race in taking the body.

It was also said that "he came not to destroy the Law but to fulfil". The Law means the whole Law on all planes of being, and part of it is the occult law which inhibits an initiate from using his knowledge or powers for self-benefit. It was said of him, "let him come down from the cross; he saved others, himself he cannot save". He did not descend from the cross, nor use any of his divine powers to escape from his persecutors; his mission was complete and they did what they willed with his body. There is no doubt that he belonged to that class of beings who had attained to wisdom, knowledge and power. His thought and effort was for his "mission", the *object* of his incarnation, and not for bodily health or long life.

Apply all this to H. P. B., and if we admit that she was an Initiate (there is plenty of evidence of this) we cannot avoid understanding the parallel.

There is one thing not generally understood, and that is the tremendous forces that exist on the higher planes of being; no ordinary physical body can stand their impact for long, the nervous and physical organism gradually giving away like the filament in an electric lamp. In April 1891, a month before she left the body, she wrote a friend in this country that "even Will and Yoga cannot keep this old rag of a body together much longer". It was not a question of bodily existence with her, it was making the body serve the mission she came to perform.

ON THE LOOKOUT

The San Francisco *Bulletin* has been running for some time a feature page each Saturday devoted to expositions of current ideas on heaven and hell. One whole issue was given over to a statement of Vedanta philosophy; another to the views of orthodox Judaism, others to the various sects, cults and individual pronouncements. Not the least interesting portion of the series has been the various personal views expressed by laymen writing direct to the paper of their own particular ideas. It is notable that an astonishingly large number of correspondents adhering to one or another of the many protestant sects nevertheless proclaim belief in reincarnation and have some more or less vague conceptions of heaven as a devachanic interlude, and not as a finality. A very large proportion of the communications have also a color of opinion dimly tinctured with ideas of Karma. Nearly all betray mental and philosophical incongruities. Alongside of the ideas of Law, immutable and unvarying, will be found in the same correspondent the idea of a God who can be offended or appeased by "faith," prayers, formulas, or the lack of them. Some theosophists share in the correspondence. In most of these the ideas of Karma are identical with the Jewish idea of Jehovah, and the conception of Masters is not notably different from the protestant ideas of Christ. One lady writes fervently of Mrs. Besant in the same strain as another writes of the Pope, and a third has the same conception of "the theosophical society" as another has of the Baptist church. From the standpoint of an impartial observer there is a marked similarity of view fundamentally in all the wide range of expressions. All have an underlying idea of one great Source, which each endeavors to define; all have a more or less recognized difficulty and confusion of thought in essaying to "explain" the contradiction between things as they are and their belief; each is proudly sure that his own faith is the true and all the others false, and what he cannot explain "is not for us to understand." It is all very childish, very pathetic, very hopeful. Childish, because no one of the views but is at odds with the *facts* of experience; pathetic, because to all of them their absurdities are sacred things; hopeful, because for the first time in thousands of years each is free to express what he thinks in a public forum without risk of punishment, ostracism or persecution at the hands of those who differ from him. It is a veritable Babel of belief and opinion in the world to-day. Only the true student of the old Wisdom-Religion can understand this confusion of tongues, and see in all the turmoil the leaven of Theosophical thought leavening the race mind. Men are inquiring into and comparing their fundamental ideas. The Babylon the great of fixed opinion is fallen, is fallen, and a new religion of mankind is in germination.

In the last month we have noted in more than a score of publications ranging from orthodox sectarian journals, through scientific and popular magazines on down to the current periodicals given over to sheer fiction for amusement, and editorials in the daily press sandwiched in paragraphs amongst the "important" matters for treatment—we have noted hundreds of theosophical terms, ideas and applications. In terms of modern chemistry there are elements, mixtures and compounds. Elements seldom exist in nature in a state of undefiled purity; even mixtures—the union in varying proportions of two or more elements,—are rare. Mostly the familiar earth and all its substances are compounds, the most bizarre pot-pourris of contradictory natures, elementally considered. It is as if mother nature, metaphorically speaking, hid all her needles in haystacks. To cover our nakedness we have to search out the needles and the one sure way of recognizing them when found is by the prick of pain. So, in these curious mixtures and compounds of literature the occasional pointed theosophical phrases and

ideas can but prick the sensibilities and intelligence of the minds that contact them. By way of marked contrast what can be more significant than the fact which anyone who reads can verify for himself, that in none of the literature of the day, serious, frivolous, business or political, is there any genuine respectful reference to modern sects and sectarian ideas, or to ecclesiastical Christianity as a whole, outside of journals so devoted? If one wants to drive the contrast home to himself let him consult novels, newspapers, magazines, and sober books on any subject a hundred years ago and earlier. Then and there the sectarian dogmas, the theological dictums, on life and action were taken and treated seriously. To-day, outside the limited and lessening circles of those whose immediate interest is wrapped up in their respective sects, who is interested in the slightest in "orthodox" dogmatic ideas? "A career" for a noble man not so long ago was Church or State or Army, in the order named. Who seeks it of reasoned and conscientious choice today? The only use the man of the present generation has for "religion" is when he dies. No wonder religion is "dead." Who "mixes his religion with his business" today? Signs of the times, we say. Man cannot do without *religion,* for he is a Soul, but the old order must change before the new order can begin. And that *novo ordo saeculorum* is not so far away as the unobservant, the timid, the superstitious, the materialistic, may think.

One of the great dailies of the Pacific coast calls attention to relics of old civilization and knowledge scattered from British Columbia down the western coast of the Americas to the Arican desert. Mounds, caves, cliff-dwellings, monuments, sculptural remains of inscriptions in unknown tongues, all of an antiquity unguessed and unguessable to modern speculators, invite questions if they do not answer them. The article calls particular attention to lithographic remnants through vast stretches of desert and mountain apparently to indicate trade or marching routes, since they are always found near water. The character of markings indicate a written language akin to Egyptian hieroglyphs, but as unreadable as Etruscan remains. *Isis Unveiled* contains many references and hints concerning former civilizations in the Americas and the antiquity of some portions of the mainland of the Western Coast. We live in the midst of a forgotten but recoverable past. Who knows but some obscure and recondite but none the less powerful lien of Karma draws back again and again into the earthly scenes of their former splendors the ancient builders. What more reasonable than that we return to our incompleted tasks of other days drawn by the wide ramifications of an eternal past? The "twelve Nidanas" or strands of causation must include in their sway all our present peregrinations, physical as well as metaphysical. There is something solemn and superb in the thought that, though civilizations wax and wane and perish, continents upheave, have their vast day and subside beneath the ocean's tomb without an epitaph, *we survive,* and in our renaissance bring forth the resurrection and the dead to newer, nobler living.

Theosophy has been destroyed again, this time by Professor Henry C. Sheldon of Boston University. He urges against the theosophical theory of man, nature and God the world-old questions of the fool in his folly. If there is reincarnation, why do we not remember our former lives? If there be Masters, why do They not come forth and prove to us Their identity, nature, powers and knowledge? If there be Spirit or spiritual Law in the universe, why do we suffer? In short, this "good old professor Treborious who follows the principle glorious" wants to know, and because he doesn't know, he wants to know why he doesn't know—and answers the questions himself by saying in effect that the reason we don't know these things is because they "ain't so." With becoming reverence and respect we dare believe

that Professor Sheldon knows several things that his pupils are as yet unaware of. What would he think if these pupils should rail at him because they also do not know what he knows? What would he do if they should in their logic, as he has in his, reason that since they do not know, it follows that he doesn't know either and that his knowledge is a pretence since he cannot forthwith transfer his knowledge to them without effort or capacity on their part? Naturally Professor Sheldon does not approve of Madame Blavatsky. Since he cannot understand her or her teachings, and since in his studies he has found abundant others like himself, why should she not appear to him as a plagiarist, a fraud and a make-believe? On the same evidence and the same reasoning as Professor Sheldon considers and applies, Jesus was a fraud, Buddha a charlatan and Plato a buffoon or a fool—for they believed and taught as did H. P. B. Further, nature is a fraud and a cheat also, because nature gives us nothing without great effort on our part, and then does not give us what we want nor all we want; nor does she "explain" herself and her processes to us, and can be convicted of double-dealing in every direction. And yet, and yet, heretic and unregenerate as we are, there are still a few who prefer H. P. B. and the other sages, Nature and philosophy, to Professor Henry C. Sheldon, Boston University, and those who "want to know" why wisdom cannot be had by prayer, purchase, and "kicking against the pricks."

"O Liberty! what crimes are committed in thy name." This is equally true of every high and soul-appealing idea and ideal. It takes the incarnated Ego ages of suffering through false beliefs and disillusionments to realize that there is nothing sacred in hell. "A man-bearing planet is the only hell we know of," wrote one of the theosophical Masters. What did He mean and why is this so? May it not well be, in part at least, because in our limited and erroneous conceptions of self we are eternally mistaking the word for the deed, the name for the reality, the profession for the practice? That once a wise being has expressed some portion of his wisdom in words any fool or any devil can cite the scripture for his own purposes? That those who listen, being deceived by sounds which they take for substance, fall into the void? Here in Los Angeles, according to the *Evening Herald* of December 19, a woman who "declares herself a student of psychology and theosophy," discusses the "ethical and moral aspects" of suicide. She is charged with poisoning her husband, which she denies, but states he committed suicide, being an invalid unwilling to endure further suffering, and that she supplied him with the means of his taking off as an act of "brotherhood." She announced that "her belief in theosophy leads her to the conviction that she only released the spirit of her husband from a disease-ridden body so that it could find housing in a new, well body." She thinks that he has been reborn in a baby body and that his "spirit" is now "free from the old suffering." Violently *un*theosophical as such ideas are, they are no worse than the necromancy put out on every hand as theosophy and theosophical, the psychism and occultism rampant in a hundred cities—all labeled as "theosophy," and serving to delude or to antagonize the mind against anything bearing the term theosophical. There is nothing Christ taught against that has not been preached and practiced in his name down the ages. There is nothing H. P. Blavatsky warned solemnly against that is not being promulgated in her name and in that of Masters and Theosophy. In the newspaper's symposium on the woman's views there are expressions of opinion pro and con, as usual. We are glad to note a clear and valid defense and promulgation by Mr. A. P. Warrington, President of the American section of Mrs. Besant's theosophical society, of the true Theosophical teachings on the subject of suicide. He is reported as saying:

> "There is no justification at all in a person taking his own life or assisting another person to take his life. Nothing can happen to us except that which we have caused to ourselves, either in this life or a

previous existence. It is not playing the game squarely to try to escape from suffering which we have brought about. And to live squarely he must work out the problem and not run away from it. Suicide, or assistance to suicide, is absolutely in opposition to Theosophy. The woman's views are absurd, and show that while she may have read and thought at random on Theosophy, she certainly was not a student of it."

With this expression we are in hearty accord. We only regret that Mr. Warrington appears as yet unable to realize that such ideas as these of the woman in question are the legitimate outcome of the absurd, speculative and untheosophical teachings, writings and practices inculcated and spread as theosophy by Mrs. Besant herself, and by practically every one of her coadjutors and intimates. Nearly every book advertised in the pages of the *Messenger,* the organ of Mr. Warrington's Section, and the pages of the magazine itself, are filled with spiritualism, psychism, astral gossip, and other literature that could not be more productive of "absurd and random" thinking and conclusions if expressly designed for the purpose. We would like to ask Mr. Warrington and every other sincere member of Mrs. Besant's society why they do not *compare* the teachings of H. P. B. with those of Mrs. Besant and her ilk, and choose one or the other boldly. We will gladly open our pages, if Mr. Warrington will open his, to a friendly but searching comparison of the teaching and example of H. P. B. *versus* Annie Besant and her associates, on what are true theosophical teachings and practices. And this, not as in any sense a challenge, but as an invitation to "search the scriptures."

Dr. Albert A. Lowenthal, a Chicago neurologist, lecturing at San Jose, Cal., on January 20, gave as his opinion that the present world epidemic of influenza is due to "planetary conditions." He declared that the present scourge has caused more deaths than the great war and that it is the worst epidemic in history. According to his theory the passage of the earth into new regions of space and other altered relations have caused "planetary influences" to withdraw from the earth's atmosphere certain ingredients whose absence has lessened the nervous power in human organisms to resist infections. The good doctor's theories may be far from accurate, but they spell a certain healthful reaction in medical circles from dogmatic ascriptions to purely physical (earthly) causation all the ills that flesh is heir to. Were we inclined to speculative prognosis we might in our turn say that despite the absurdities and exaggerations of the Freudian, the new thought and Christian Science practitioners, and their inability (like the physical healers) to do more than say that such and such a pill of their compounding will have such and such an effect on the bodily organs—despite all this, we would affirm that mental and moral states and attitudes, especially when common to vast masses of people, affect injuriously or beneficently the physical condition of mankind. And further, since we hold that "mind" is not unsubstantial nor immaterial, we predicate that its substantial basis must be identical with some of the interpenetrating constituents of inter-stellar space, and changes in the "ether" must affect the composition of some of the states of matter in the nature of man. And on these finer states of matter the thought, feeling and desire of man must act as a powerful catalytic agent directly, and hence on coarser states indirectly. But we hazard the opinion that the "planetary influences" are due rather to the injection of fresh ingredients than to the withdrawal of accustomed ones. In either case, the change would have to be proportionately very considerable in order of itself to affect mankind. The body will extract what it requires from a very wide food variant, and reject what is unwholesome to its needs. And this must be just as true psychically and mentally. The seat of the trouble lies in mankind. From a prolonged and almost universal high tension mentally and morally there is a pronounced mass reaction since the close of the war, and this must lessen the

nervous power of resistance physically. For all we know, the influenza may be a blessing in disguise against a far worse visitation to come.

In the February *Cosmopolitan* magazine Maurice Maeterlinck, who is accounted by very many people a philosopher of high rank because he has written much on philosophy, discusses "The Two Lobes." He refers to the two hemispheres of the brain, one of which he calls the Eastern or spiritual, and the other the Western or practical. He means, of course, the theory of dual independent action of the two halves of the cerebrum, making possible to materialistic minded dreamers the idea of the "super-man." The foundation of his article is a letter received by him from a soldier, containing the phrase, "The odor of Christ (the theological Christ) has little charm for me; I prefer that of Buddha (the Buddha of exoteric Buddhism). "Philosopher" Maeterlinck disposes of the matter as follows:

> "A living death, an incessant suicide—that is the essence of Buddhism. Buddha lives solely and exclusively to die, and to die more certainly, more wholly, more absolutely than any other creature, in order at length to enter Nirvana, that is, to-day, total extinction.
>
> "This doctrine, as we see, is exactly the reverse of that of Christ. With Buddha, life is only the gate of death; with Christ, death is the gate of life."

After having thus written an obituary of Buddha and Buddhism, Christ and Christianity, in an impartial interment of these two sages and their teachings, from which no resurrection is henceforth possible, Mr. Maeterlinck speaks as a man to men (using perhaps the Western Lobe), as follows:

> "But what do we know, as compared with what we do not know? We are ignorant of all that comes before and of all that comes after us—in a word, of the whole universe. Our despair, which appears at first as the last word and the last effort of wisdom, is therefore based upon what we know, which is nothing; whereas the hope of those whom we believe to be less wise (we infer that Buddha and Christ are meant) can be based upon what we do not know, which is everything."

There are people—the observation is that of one Epictetus sometimes known as a philosopher—to whom it is as easy to teach philosophy as it is to eat custard with a fork. We opine that it is for such that Mr. Maeterlinck writes. For, *certes,* common-sense must have something to do with philosophy, whether as teacher or as pupil. Why should any one go to a priest or a false philosopher to learn what Buddha taught, or Christ? Many do, but they would infinitely better stick to custard. And to any one who understands in the slightest the real teachings of Christ or of Buddha, Mr. Maeterlinck's second quotation is worse than supererogatory. He not only knows nothing of either Christ or Buddha, but he knows worse than nothing, for he knows what is not true of them or of their teachings. Nevertheless, we admit an obligation to Mr. Maeterlinck quite apart from that due the writer of "The Bee" and "The Bluebird." By this contribution on "philosophy" to an admiratory public he helps us to understand better that theosophical palate which prefers Mrs. Ella Wheeler Wilcox and her like as "philosophers" who discourse on Theosophy no less lucidly and completely than Mr. Maeterlinck on immortality and the teachings of Christ and Buddha thereon.